

Water Issues



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Vital Information on Water Issues Spring 1999

San Gabriel Basin Drinking Water Initiative

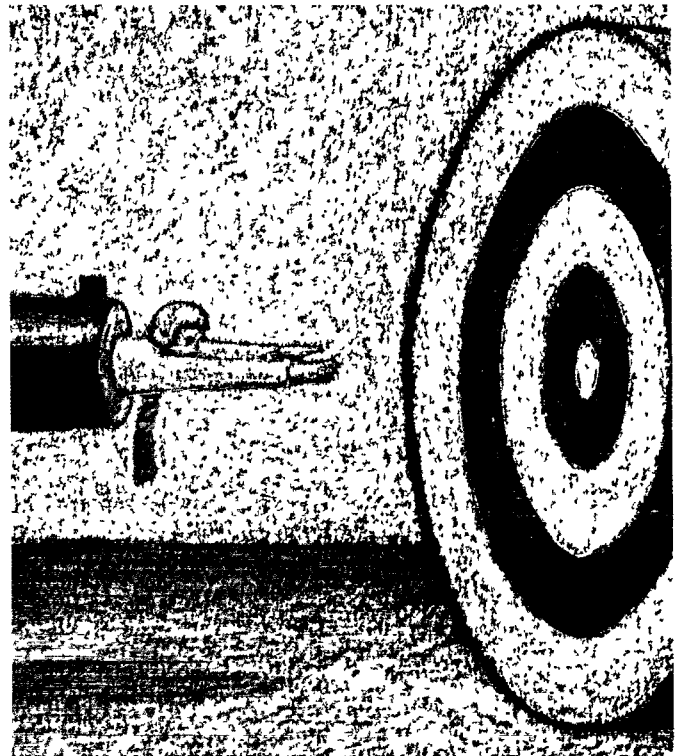
New Public-Private Partnership Aims to Ensure Clean Water

Big challenges require bold responses. San Gabriel Basin groundwater contamination is a big challenge. Local water agencies are embarking on a bold effort to raise over \$100 million to accelerate the groundwater cleanup.

In 1979, authorities first discovered that portions of the San Gabriel Valley's groundwater supply were contaminated. At the time, there were no practical treatment techniques to remove the contaminants, and one-quarter of the region's drinking water wells had to be shut down. Since then, treatment techniques have been developed, funding obtained, and billions of gallons of water have been cleaned up.

Despite much progress, new water quality challenges are periodically discovered. Although water agencies have in every case overcome the challenges caused by each new discovery, cleanup progress has been slowed down.

This edition of *Water Issues* provides information about the *San Gabriel Basin Drinking Water Initiative*. ♦



San Gabriel Basin water agencies are targeting their combined resources by raising over \$100 million to accelerate the regional groundwater cleanup.



San Gabriel Valley Water Association

Some Background Information

Contaminants in groundwater spread slowly as the water flows naturally through the aquifer. Construction of treatment plants along the leading edge of the flow controls its migration. However, water quality challenges such as the discovery of Perchlorate have repeatedly interrupted cleanup progress. In response, water agencies are proposing a \$100 million *San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund* to rapidly advance the cleanup and to overcome new challenges. ♦



Much of the groundwater contamination is a result of the manufacture of military and aerospace products. Local water agencies want the federal government to be a major partner in financing the *San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund*.

San Gabriel Basin Drinking Water Initiative

Improve and Protect Water Quality for 1.4 Million People

Water Agencies Plan Comprehensive Cleanup Effort

The groundwater contamination problem developed because of old industrial practices. Local agencies have made tremendous progress removing industrial chemicals from groundwater in recent years. But at the current pace, it could take many more years to fully clean up the groundwater.

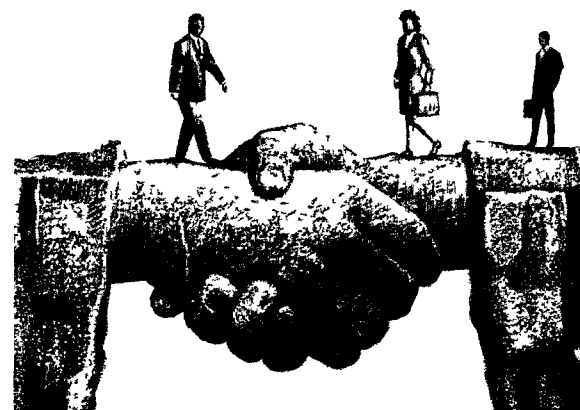
Joint Local, State and Federal Restoration Fund

In order to accelerate the necessary cleanup, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority and the San Gabriel Valley Water Association have proposed the creation of the *San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund*. The goal is to raise over \$100 million, from the federal and state governments, as well as \$100 million more from the private sector.

Develop New Treatment Technologies and Construct Facilities

The plan involves constructing treatment facilities throughout the Basin to facilitate the cleanup of contaminated areas. Scientific and technical knowledge gained from the cleanup will be made available to others with similar contamination problems throughout the country. ♦

Restoration Fund at a Glance



Develop partnerships with the private sector and public agencies locally, statewide and nationally.

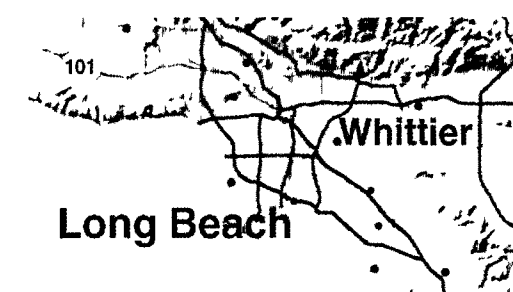
Raise over \$100 million to finance a more aggressive groundwater cleanup program.

Plan projects for the first major infusion of federal funds by 2001 or 2002.

Conduct major research and cleanup activities across the San Gabriel Basin.

Major Threat Requires Major Response

Water agencies have limited the impact of groundwater contamination by constructing water treatment facilities, using new groundwater management techniques and shutting down wells. This effective, but slow, approach must be replaced by a bolder, more rapid and cooperative cleanup effort across the whole region – precisely what the *San Gabriel Basin Drinking Water Initiative* proposes to accomplish. ♦



The San Gabriel Basin is faced with the very slow spread of contaminants. One purpose of the *San Gabriel Basin Drinking Water Initiative* is to assure that contaminants do not spread to the massive Central Basin, which stretches from the edge of the San Gabriel Valley all the way to Long Beach.

The Community, the Economy, & the Environment

San Gabriel Valley water suppliers always provide water that meets strict drinking water standards. But the local effort alone cannot resolve the contamination problems inherited from the past. Local agencies are therefore building a public-private partnership of local, state and federal agencies to undertake an accelerated cleanup effort. Benefits to the community, the environment and the local economy will be substantial. ♦

Local Agencies Promote Water Restoration Fund Legislation

Local water agencies are working with local congressional representatives on the *San Gabriel Basin Restoration Act of 1999*. It proposes a \$100 million federal contribution over five years. This support is critical since much of the groundwater contamination resulted from national defense related work. A recent delegation to Washington D.C. found bipartisan support for the legislation. ♦

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• San Gabriel Valley Water Association • Three Valleys Municipal Water District • Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

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